

Message Text

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S E C R E T BEIRUT 1420

EXDIS TREAT AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, IS, LE, MPOS
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON: DISCUSSION WITH SARKIS, HOSS AND
BOUTROS

1. MET WITH SARKIS HOSS AND BOUTTROS AT 1915 LOCAL MARCH 16.
READ TO THEM AND EXPLAINED FIRST FIVE PARAS REFTEL AND THEN
WHENT THROUGH PARA SIX WITH THEM VERY CAREFULLY, EMPHASIZING
THAT RETURN TO STATUS QUO ANTE WAS NOT ON AN THAT WHAT TO
DO ABOUT FLO SHOULD NOT TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER QUESTION OF
WITHDRAWAL AND STABILIZING BORDER AREA. ALSO REVIEWED WITH
THEM VIETS CONVERSATION WITH GEBIN, IN PARTICULAR
THREE QUESTIONS POSED BY LATTER IN PARA SEVEN
JERUSALEM'S 764.

2. BOUTROS SAID GOL NEEDED MORE INFORMATION ITSELF BEFORE IT
COULD TAKE SECISION WHAT TO DO. THEY HAD FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

A. WHAT SORT OF A ROLE DID WE ENVISAGE FOR UN FORCE? LIKE
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BEGIN THEY WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHETHER IT WOULD BE ACTIVE OR
PASSIVE.

B. WHAT DID WE ENVISAGE ITS NUMBERS AND ARMS WOULD BE?
WOULD IT HAVE CAPABILITY TO, FOR INSTANCE,
PREVENT ARMED PALESTINIANS FROM OCCUPYING A VILLAGE?

C. HOW LONG WOULD IT TAKE TO GET FORCE ON GROUND?

D. WHAT WOULD BE ITS COMPOSITION?

E. WHAT WOULD BE THE ROLE OF THE LEBANESE ARMY IN THIS EXERCISE?

3. BOUTROS CONTINUED THAT ABSOLUTELY KEY QUESTION WOULD BE HOW LEBANESE TROOPS WOULD PROTECT THEIR LINES OF COMMUNICATION TO NORTH. HE REALIZED THIS WAS LEBANESE PROBLEM, BUT WE SHOULD KNOW IT WAS A PREOCCUPATION.

4. I SAID IT SEEMED TO ME THAT EVEN MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION WAS ATTITUDE OF OTHER ARAB STATES. DID THEY HAVE ANY INDICATION WHAT THEY MIGHT BE? BOUTROS SAID THEY WOULD HAVE BETTER IDEA IN THIS REGARD SHORTLY. I SAID SYRIAN ATTITUDE IN PARTICULAR WAS VERY IMPORTANT. BOUTROS AND SARKIS AGREED AND BOUTROS SAID THEY HOPED TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THAT TOMORROW. (I ASSUME KHADDAM OR SOMEONE ELSE WILL BE COMING TO BEIRUT BECAUSE BOUTROS INDICATED HE WOULD BE HERE.)

5. BOUTROS THEN ASKED IF WE HAD ANY IDEA OF SOVIET REACTION TO UNEF IDEA. I SAID I DID NOT. PRIME MINISTER COMMENTED, AND I AGREED, THAT SOVIET VIEW WOULD BE INFLUENCED BY ARAB VIEW.

6. BOUTROS SAID THE ARAB COUNTRIES WHOSE VIEWS
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WERE MOST IMPORTANT WERE THOSE BORDERING ISRAEL. HE DID NOT THINK EGYPT OR JORDAN WOULD GIVE ANY TROUBLE. PROBLEM WOULD BE WITH SYRIA, WHICH ALREADY BEING ACCUSED BY EGYPTIANS OF LEAVING PALESTINIANS IN LURCH.

7. WE DISCUSSED MECHANICS OF PROBLEM ON GROUND, I NOTED THAT WEIZMAN HAD SUGGESTED DAY BEFORE THAT SOMETHING ALONG LINES OF UNWRITTEN AGREEMENTS WITH SYRIA, JORDAN AND EGYPT MIGHT WORK. DID THEY THINK THAT WAS A POSSIBILITY IN THIS CASE? THEY DID NOT KNOW. SYRIANS WOULD HAVE TO GIVE THE ASSURANCES AND THAT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT HOW COULD SYRIANS ENFORCE SUCH A COMMITMENT ANYWAY IF THEY COULD NOT MOVE SOUTH OF LITANI? I SPECULATED THAT IT MIGHT EVEN BE POSSIBLE THAT ISRAELIS WOULD PERMIT SYRIANS TO MOVE UP TO BUFFER ZONE. BOUTROS NOTED THAT IF THIS MEANT SYRIANS WOULD HAVE TO DISCIPLINE PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH, THAT WOULD BUT THEM IN A REAL BIND. WEIZMAN MIGHT NOT BE MUCH OF A GENERAL BUT HE WAS A CLEVER POLITICIAN TO SUGGEST SUCH IDEA.

8. I THEN ASKED WHETHER LEBANESE ARMY COULD TAKE OVER JOB, WITHOUT UN FORCE. BOUTROS SAID THIS WOULD BE PREFERRED SOLUTION

AND THEY WERE DEBATING QUESTION THEMSELVES AND PLANNED DISCUSS IT WITH GENERAL KHOURY LATER IN EVENING. DID I THINK ISRAELIS WOULD ACCEPT SOMETHING LIKE THAT? I SAID IT WOULD DEPEND ON SIZE OF FORCES LEBANES COULD SEND TO REGION. THEY COULD NOT DO IT WITH 300 OR 600 MEN. THEY WOULD NEED MANY MORE. BOUTROS SAID THAT WAS EXACTLY THE POINT. THEY WOULD NEED THOUSANDS. THIS IS WHAT THEY MUST DECIDE.

9. I LEFT WITH AGREEMENT WE WOULD TALK AGAIN IN MORNING. I RETURNED TO RESIDENCE TO RECEIVE FLASH TELEGRAM GIVING REST MY ABORTIVE CONVERSATION WITH DRAPER.

10. COMMENT: BELIEVE LEBANESE RHOROUGHLY SENSITIZED TO IMPORTANCE OF SYRIAN VIEWS. ALSO BELIEVE THEY REALIZE THEY SECRET

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CANNOT SIT ON HANDS AND EXPECT US TO ARRANGE EVERYTHING AND THAT THEY APPRECIATE FACT WE ARE TRYING RESTORE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY TO THE AREA. AT THIS JUNCTURE, HOWEVER, THERE ARE TWO FACTORS THEY MUST TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION. ONE IS ARAB AND SOVIET ATTITUDE. THEY CREDIT SOVIETS, THROUGHT THEIR IRAQI AND LIBYAN CLIENTS IF NOT OTHERWISE, WITH CONSIDERABLE CAPABILITY FOR PLAYING SPOILING ROLE. SIMILARLY, THEY ARE DEPENDENT ON SYRIAN COOPERATION IT THEY ARE TO CONTROL SECOND PROBLEM, WHICH IS ARMED PALESTINIANS. WHILE IT IS ALL VERY WELL FOR DEPARTMENT TO SAY QUESTION OF DISPLACED PLO FORCES CANNOT TAKE PRECEDENCE OVER PROBLEM OF STABILIZING BORDER, FACT IS THAT BORDER CANNOT BE STABILIZED UNLESS THERE IS UNDERSTANDING WITH SYRIANS ABOUT CONTROLLING PLO. IF PLO CANNOT BE BROUGHT UNDER SOME SORT OF CONTROL, NEIGHER LEBANESE ARMY NOR ANY UNITED NATIONS FORCE WE ARE LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO GET TO GO INTO BUFFER ZONE WILL BE ABLE TO FUNCTION, BECAUSE THEY WILL BE SUBJECT TO CONTINUAL PLO HARRASSMENT.

11. IN ANY EVENT, FACT THAT GOL SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING LEBANESE ARMY ROLE IN AFFAIR IS, I THINK, ENCOURAGING. LET US HOPE THEY FIND THE RESOLUTION TO FOLLOW THROUGH ON THAT IDEA. PARKER

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